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THE HISTORY AND AMOURS OF RHODOPE.

SI VENEREM COUS NUNQUAM PINXISSET APELLES;
MERSA SUB ÆQUOREIS ILLA LATERET AQUIS.

OVIDIUS ART. AMANDI.

LONDON:
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[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS AND SIX-PENCE.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

PUBLIC.

THE inimitable performances of an *Angelica Kauffmann*, and the maſterly ſtrokes of the graver of a *Franceſco Bartolozzi*, are ſo well known to all the admirers of the fine arts, that it would be imprudence to pretend to recommend them to the public, by a performance like this. But the hiſtory of Rhodope might either be overlooked by many, or forgotten by others; it is therefore with this view that the publiſher found it neceſſary to inſtruct the one part, and to refreſh the memory of the other, by a ſhort recital of the hiſtory and amours of Rhodope. Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Ovid, Svidas, and others gave the materials for this Hiſtory; the putting of the materials together, and embelliſhing the whole by poëtical fiction and epiſodes has fallen to the ſhare of the Author. The well known Hiſtory of Rhodope's and Æſopus's love is the ſubject of one picture of Signora Angelica Kauffmann; and that of the ſecond, the choice the King of Egypt made of Rhodope for his ſpouſe. The pen is unable to give an account of the infinite merit of the fair Artiſt's performance and of each excellence of her pencil. The ſoft, pithy, and maſterly graver of the other Artiſt alone is capable of doing her amply juſtice, by recalling to our minds that correctneſs

of

of the deſign, the nobleneſs and elegance of the characters, the judicious grouping, the excellent diſpoſition of the whole, the manly and well underſtood *Chiaro oſcuro*, the ſoft touches of the fleſh, the ſimplicity and beauty of the drapery, the poëtical animation, the expreſſion, and acquaintance with the ideal beauty, ſo richly diſplaid in the two pictures, which the publiſher humbly and reſpectfully offers to communicate to the public, in two beautiful Engravings.

The above prints, the publiſher hopes to be able to deliver to thoſe who will honour him with their ſubſcription, ſome time in the month of October of this preſent year; as one of them is already in great forwardneſs. The price to ſubſcribers will be one guinea for them both, (when printed in red); *half of which ſum is to be paid at the time of ſubſcribing, the other half on the delivering of the two prints: after which time the price will be advanced to non-ſubſcribers. Impreſſions taken off in colours, are to be ſubſcribed for at three guineas both prints; one half of which ſum is to be paid at the time of ſubſcribing, and the other half on the delivering of the two prints.*

LONDON,
No. 377, *Strand*,
May 1, 1780.

E. M. DIEMAR.

THE

THE HISTORY AND AMOURS OF RHODOPE.

THE philoſopher Xanthus, went into Thrace in order to purchaſe ſome ſlaves: he by accident ſaw there, young Rhodope, whom he thought, even in her moſt tender years, to be extremely pretty, which induced him to propoſe it to her parents to purchaſe her from them; they were poor, and therefore did not heſitate to cloſe with the propoſal. Xanthus ſoon after returned to Egypt, and preſented the pretty Thracian girl to his wife; who, on account of thoſe ſimple and natural graces of her perſon, and the wit ſhe then already diſplayed, received her with the greateſt pleaſure.

Rhodope's beauty increaſed ſo rapidly in a few years, that all the other female ſlaves of the family, who were very numerous, conceived jealouſy againſt her: but Rhodope, conſcious of her own charms, was entirely free from that paſſion, and made it her chief occupation to merit that love and praiſe which were profuſely beſtowed upon her.

She was in that happy period of life, wherein every increaſe of beauty preſages, as it were, a ſtill greater increaſe of its luſtre and brilliancy. When Xanthus purchaſed the celebrated Eſopus; it was well known, that upon finding him among a great number of well-made ſlaves, who all pretended that they underſtood every thing; he was likewiſe aſked about his talents, and ſaid, he was ſkilled in no one thing, ſince his comrades were fit for every buſineſs. This reply, together with the reaſonable terms at which the merchant offered to part with him, induced the philoſopher to buy no other ſlave but him. The philoſopher jocoſely ſaid to his ſpouſe, that he would ſhew her the moſt handſome man, who was become his property. The lady, not ſuſpecting the raillery of her huſband, ran to meet Eſopus, followed by all her female ſlaves; but the uglineſs and deformity of this Phrygian cauſed them all to ſhrink back with fright, and every one gave marks of her averſion for him. Rhodope alone ſhewed ſome concern at his meeting with ſo injurious a reception, ſhe even ſpoke in a friendly manner to him; and either from a particular ſympathy, or out of her conſtant endeavour to pleaſe, ſhe at the very firſt outſet, treated him with diſtinction, and behaved ſo obligingly to him, that compaſſion ſeemed not to be the ſole cauſe of her behaviour. It would be too tedious to enumerate the different occaſions whereon Eſopus began to diſplay his wit, ſince they are univerſally known, at the early age which precedes the learning of reading. Rhodope, whoſe taſte was naturally of the moſt delicate and exquiſite kind, allowed to the repartees of the Phrygian ſlave all that merit, which they deſerved, and obſerved her riſing fondneſs increaſe at every one of them; of which a thouſand clear proofs eſcaped her, in ſpite of her vigilance. Eſopus was too clear-ſighted not to perceive them, and had too much ſenſibility to be moved

at this diſcovery. But at the ſame time he was poſſeſſed of ſo much ſelf-knowledge, that he did not think it juſt to let himſelf be carried away by his paſſion and the flattering diſtinctions which betrayed modeſty and timidity, and could not eſcape his penetration. How is it poſſible, ſaid he to himſelf, to be blinded in ſuch a manner, as not to be frightened at my uglineſs? I ſtartle myſelf, whenever chance brings me before a mirror, or to a fountain. Can the wit beſtowed by the gods upon me, counterbalance for a moment my frightful figure in the eyes of a young perſon? And could this even happen, does it then ſuppoſe love? And however it is love, if I am not miſtaken, which charming Rhodope diſcovers for me; how adorable muſt ſhe be, if, deſpiſing the frivolous ——————But, no, added he, it is the paſſion which I conceive for her, that flatters me. Forced to renounce all the deceits of ſelf-love, I cannot in the leaſt doubt that I am the uglieſt man on earth: and, if I do not chuſe to be the moſt ridiculous, I ought to ſuſpect a cruel ſarcaſm, under ſuch agreeable appearances. By this kind of reaſoning, Eſopus conſidered all the little attacks of Rhodope as ſuſpicious; but ſince he looked upon her as the moſt beautiful girl, love inſenſibly ſeduced his reaſon, and he meditated inceſſantly in order to dive into a myſtery, which he thought to be the more impenetrable, the more care was taken to unravel it to him. Perhaps we are indebted to the various emotions by which he was agitated whilſt he felt this paſſion for Rhodope, for that ingenious ſkill, with which he painted the paſſions of mankind.

The weakneſs of his heart, in the mean time, was externally concealed; he neglected to pay to this handſome girl even thoſe civilities which he ſhewed to her companions. She often reproached him with this neglect, and blending reſentment with tenderneſs, ſhe ſaid many ſmart things, the cauſe of which was ſo ſweet.

One

One day when he, with compoſure, ſaw her drawing water from a well, without even offering her his aſſiſtance, ſhe ſpoke angrily to him;—Indeed, Eſopus, either your eyes are bad judges, or you are, by no means, remarkable for penetration. I think myſelf to be at leaſt as good as thoſe, whom you prefer to me, and by my perſonal charms, and by————At theſe words an agreeable bluſh overſpread her cheeks, and ſhe left off ſpeaking. The ingenious Phrygian was too well acquainted with nature, not to be charmed with this ſally. But he would not lend a friendly hand to the expreſſion of Rhodope; on the contrary, he looked upon her with indifference, as if he did not underſtand any thing of her diſcourſe. O, that is too much! ſaid ſhe, in overturning the veſſel, which ſhe had been at a great trouble to fill, there is not another man in Egypt who would have thus received the teſtimony of my weakneſs! Some tears, which diſappointment preſſed from the fair ſlave, heightened her beauty ſo much, that Eſopus was on the point of throwing himſelf at her feet; but thinking it more convenient to make his declaration in his own manner, he ſaid to her, that he was going to tell her a fable, and expreſſed himſelf in theſe words:

Several female turtle-doves lived in a cage without a cock-bird of their own ſpecies, without liberty, and conſequently without love, and without pleaſure. A raven of the neighbourhood found means to be admitted into their company. There was among them a young and handſome dove, which bore the recluſe life with more impatience than the reſt. She often gently pecked at the raven, who found her but too deſirable an object: however, convinced of his ſable plumage and ugly form, he wanted to conceal his paſſion under a feigned indifference, in order the better to diſcover the ſentiments of the white dove. This meaſure ſucceeded ſo well, that he enjoyed

ſuch

ſuch bliſs, as would even tempt the gods to jealouſy. Nothing is capable of interrupting his happineſs but the fear of ſeeing his miſtreſs carried off by the bird of mighty, Jove.

Thus concluded Eſopus, by a kind of prophecy, which was fulfilled in the ſequel. Rhodope had time enough to wipe off her tears; a ſweet ſmile adorned her face; but this declaration of Eſopus, was ſo far from emboldening her to explain herſelf better, that ſhe only anſwered by jokes; in ſo much, that he had the grief of believing himſelf expoſed to that ridicule, which he had ſo much apprehended: behold ſaid he, cruel Rhodope, it is this, which I feared from my deformity; it was only with a view of deceiving me, that you treated me ſo favorably. Are you not ſuperlatively happy? replied ſhe archly; I have given you hope; and it is ſaid, that nothing exceeds it in bliſs. Yes, inhuman girl, anſwered he, I taſted rapturous delight, even in this flattering hope; but how much the more am I at preſent to be pitied! He was willing to depart, when Rhodope feigned to laugh at theſe words; but at laſt ſhe ſtretched her hand towards him, with thoſe bewitching graces, which in handſome women never fail of conqueſt. She added five or ſix words more, perhaps not half ſo endearing than thouſand others, which ſhe on former occaſions had ſaid to him, and theſe put him on the higheſt pinnacle of rapturous bliſs.

After this ſhort converſation, which ended by mutual aſſurances of eternal love, Eſopus went down to the well and filled the pitcher, which Rhodope in her anger had emptied; he carried it, and enjoyed that pleaſure which is felt in becoming ſerviceable to the beloved object; nay, he ſeemed to himſelf to walk lighter than uſual. The fertile genius of this Phrygian, furniſhed him in the ſequel, with a thouſand new methods of gaining the affection of

Rhodope,

Rhodope, and of procuring her new diverſions: ſometimes he made garlands of flowers to adorn her hair, at others he preſented her with the moſt delicious fruits of the ſeaſon; he taught birds to ſing and to ſpeak; he gave her a little dog, whom he taught a thouſand pretty tricks; and theſe offerings, though ſimple in appearances, were always accompanied by ingenious fables, having morals, or gallantry, in their application. Rhodope knew the full value of his productions, and ſince agreeable imagery hides, what is too ſevere in truth, too ſtern in reaſon, and too tireſome in ſcience, the witty Æſopus, who was ſkilful in blending the pleaſing and the uſeful together, taught Rhodope, by way of play ſo ſucceſsfully, the polite arts and philoſophy, that admiration being blended with love, formed a paſſion ſo heightened by real eſteem, that it filled all the moments of his life with the moſt rapturous delight.

The ſlavery of Rhodope no longer appeared a hardſhip to her. The Phrygian ſpared to her delicate hands; all kinds of hard work to which her ſtate ſubjected her of courſe, and he amuſed her reaſon and her fancy, by the moſt entertaining converſation; but fate deſtined theſe lovers for very different ſtations, and therefore broke off the farther enjoyment of their heartfelt pleaſures. Charaxus, brother of the celebrated Sappho, and the moſt wealthy merchant of his time, came often to Egypt for the tranſaction of buſineſs, and there heard the beauty of Rhodope praiſed: He became acquainted with Xanthus, in order to judge of it by his own eyes. He found her far ſurpaſſing the common report, and as the philoſopher was by no means blind to his own intereſt, he accepted, after ſome heſitation, the enormous price which Charaxus was willing to pay for this beautiful ſlave.

Several authors recount the amours of Rhodope and the Phrygian; but none deſcribed their feelings at their ſeparation. It muſt therefore be believed, that Eſopus aſſiſted by his philoſophy, ſuppreſſed the deſpair he muſt otherwiſe have felt on the occaſion of this misfortune, which it was not in his power to avert: and that Rhodope, having her liberty granted to her by Charaxus, who thought her more worthy of binding others in chains, than of being herſelf detained by them, might perhaps ſoon forget a lover, who had ſuch material defects in his perſon; ſo much is known, that ſoon after ſhe had been freed by Charaxus, ſhe quitted him; and that loaded with thoſe treaſures ſhe had received from this generous benefactor, ſhe retired to Naucratis, an Egyptian town, whoſe inhabitants were wealthy and luxuri-] ous. Charaxus, who loved this woman paſſionately, abandoned, for ſome time, the ſuperintendance of his trade, in order to enjoy the pleaſure of ſeeing her. He quitted Mytilene, the place of his reſidence, and haſtened to Naucratis, where he found Rhodope ſurrounded by lovers, and her avowedly in the character of a courteſan, but with a ſplendor and pomp, which made her appear in his eyes a thouſand times more handſome, than when he was ſole poſſeſſor of her. He again ſhared his wealth and treaſure with her, and ſhe received them as a divinity receives the offerings preſented to her, not thinking herſelf obliged to exclude thoſe of the reſt of her worſhippers.

The weak Charaxus, contented himſelf with this allotment; enraptured by Rhodope's looks; he imagined her abſence more cruel, than poverty itſelf; and the contempt alone, ſhe ſhewed for his addreſſes, when his preſents decreaſed, awakened him from his dream, and prompted him to new exertions, for again amaſſing wealth, wherewith he might purchaſe new favours: Sappho, who was well informed of her brother's paſſion, was very much diſ-

pleaſed

pleaſed to ſee him ruin his fortune with a miſtreſs, who did not receive him kindly. She ſpoke often about it, in very harſh expreſſions to him, and he commonly excuſed himſelf with the power of beauty; but ſince ſhe had taken a great authority over him, ſhe never left off cenſuring his conduct; at laſt he loſt all patience, and forgetting what was due to the ties of blood, and to the merit of his illuſtrious ſiſter, he ſaid, leave off Sappho to plague me about a woman whom I adore, or begin with amending yourſelf. Whom have you not loved? And whom do you not ſtill love? Do you ſet any bounds to your paſſion? I adore Rhodope, but who would refuſe to pay homage to her charms? If it be a fault at all, can there be a more excuſable one? But, as to yourſelf ſiſter, who could exculpate all the irregularities of your conduct? Charaxus then entered into a detail, which it would be highly improper to repeat. Sappho did not ſpare him, in her reply; but ſo bitter a converſation diſunited them for ever, and did not operate the leaſt change, in the conduct of either.

The reader will not take it unkindly, if we make here a ſhort digreſſion, in order to ſay a few words about the celebrated Sappho. But few are unacquainted with her hiſtory, however there are characters which render repetitions excuſable. This learned lady united with the moſt delicate ſentiments in love, a vivacity which did not permit her to keep within the ordinary bounds of this paſſion. Beauty deſerved in her opinion love, wherever her eyes were bleſſed with its ſight. So at leaſt it was, if we give faith to antiquity, which has tranſmitted to us the names of Atthis, Cydno, and Teleſilea, celebrated by her in her verſes, and had Phaon not been the moſt handſome and the moſt graceful figure of his age, he would never have merited thoſe tranſports of her love, nor would ſhe have beſtowed on him that

glow

glow of poetry in her ſongs. Sappho addreſſed this youth in all the various methods her fancy could invent, ſhe made for him her divine compoſitions, ſhe followed him every where; ſhe permitted her eyes to ſpeak her ſentiments, and all the world knows their unparalleled brilliancy; ſhe laſtly ſpoke with that flow of eloquence, which avowedly was irreſiſtible; and love adding to her words perſuaſion, Phaon ſurrendered at laſt at theſe preſſing and endearing teſtimonies of her paſſion: Sappho enjoyed the pleaſure of this conqueſt, of which ſhe by no means made a myſtery, and rather gloried in it: and though ſhe had been long acquainted with love, ſhe thought this paſſion ſo new, as if ſhe had never loved before.

It is ſometimes dangerous to diſcloſe our love too freely, the moſt handſome ladies find this ſometimes, a rock on which they ſhipwreck; how therefore ſhould Sappho have been exempted from its conſequences, who had never been bleſſed with a great ſhare of beauty, and whoſe bloom of youth was paſt. Phaon became indifferent towards her; her endearments beeame at laſt inſupportable, and her converſation no longer amuſed him; he pretended buſineſs, wherever he was ſure not to meet Sappho; at laſt he gave out, that he was obliged to go to Sicily, his native country, and rekindling in all appearance the ardour of his paſſion, he made a thouſand vows to Sappho of his return to Leſbos; but the promiſes of lovers are written on unfaithful ſand, and he never had a mind to keep them. He received ſeveral letters from Sappho, which notwithſtanding their ſentimental and beautiful expreſſions could never prevail upon him to write an anſwer. This ungenerous behaviour pierced the heart of the Leſbian lady, without abating any thing of her love. As it is very hurtful to flatter ourſelves with hopes, ſhe ſailed to Sicily, in order to clear up the cauſe of his ſilence, but here

Phaon's inſenſibility was confirmed to her beyond any doubt, ſince he himſelf confeſſed the fault, with ſome appearance of remorſe, but without giving her the leaſt hopes of the return of his paſſion. The unfortunate Leſbian lady could not bear this ſtroke without giving herſelf up to deſpair; and not being willing to be tormented by long ſufferings, ſhe aſcended to the top of a high rock, called ever ſince the *lover's-leap*, and threw herſelf ſpiritedly into the ſea.

Phaon, being informed of this melancholy cataſtrophe, paid the tribute of ſome tears to her memory; but ſince mere compaſſion and gratitude were their cauſes, he took care to rid himſelf of an idea, which might cauſe him to repent. The reputation of Rhodope was ſpreading over all the known parts of the world. Charaxus himſelf unmindful, that by praiſing her charms, he might raiſe to himſelf rivals, had often painted them in a manner, which awakened the curioſity of Phaon: his leiſure and the deſire of ſeeing this illuſtrious beauty, determined to him to undertake a voyage to Egypt. He went away with no more than one ſingle ſervant, and the moment he was landed, he bought horſes, and ſtopt no where on the road, with a view to arrive the ſooner at the end of his journey. It was pretty late when he arrived near Naucratis, and juſt at that delicious moment, when the ſun diffuſes but a faint light, and affords a more pure and refreſhing air for breathing to the inhabitants of hot climates. Scarcely had Phaon begun to enjoy the ſweetneſs of this evening, when he diſcovered an infinite number of workmen employed in the elevation of a noble Pyramid: curioſity prompted him to draw nearer, the better to examine the ſtructure; but how much the more agreeably were his eyes feaſted! A young and noble figure was alone advancing on a magnificent carr: a numerous retinue of well ſhaped and

magnificently

magnificently dreſſed men on the fineſt horſes, ſurrounded the vehicle; and afforded one of the moſt brilliant and enchanting ſights. Joy was conſpicuous in every one of this troop of horſemen. Phaon's eyes were immediately rivetted to the lady on the carr; and knowing that there was no Queen of Egypt at that time, he did not one moment heſitate in thinking her to be the charming Rhodope.

The eyes of a perſon initiated in gallantry, roam commonly over great ſpaces: thoſe of Rhodope caught immediately the new object, and became animated with ſuch new luſture, that Phaon found himſelf quite overcome; ſhe ſeemed to diſcover, that her charms had been conquering: who are you? ſaid ſhe, and made a ſignal for him to draw nearer. Which country gave you birth? And if you are not Phaon, what other man could have your ſhape and appearance? Phaon, ſurprized and flattered with this kind reception, acknowledged himſelf to be the man ſhe named. Follow me then, replied Rhodope, if the purpoſe of your journey will admit of it; I ſhould be very glad to hear your adventures, and above all, thoſe of Sappho. Phaon having had time to recollect himſelf, anſwered with a good grace; that ſince he was come to Egypt with no other intent, than to ſee her, he was ready to devote to her his time and his life; Rhodope repaid this obliging compliment, with a condeſcending nod of her head; and ordering her carr to return to town, ſhe ſpoke during all the way to no one but Phaon.

The unfortunate Charaxus, who was witneſs of this interview, could never pardon himſelf for being the cauſe both of the voyage of Phaon and of the prejudice of Rhodope in his favour; he knew very well, what favourable ſentiments women uſually have for ſuch men, as have been the object of violent amorous paſſions, and eſpecially if kindled in very remarkable

and famous perſons. He had a thouſand times recounted to Rhodope, the tragical end of Sappho; and he was therefore of opinion, that this circumſtance being ſo injurious to Phaon, would likewiſe prompt Rhodope to be upon her guard, againſt the ſame unhappy fate. But how ill did he know the heart of man, and more ſo that of a woman. Examples never have amended one of them! For ſelf love flatters us always with miraculous events!

When Rhodope and her admirers were arrived at her houſe; Phaon, who hitherto had paid attention to no other object but her, diſcovered with diſpleaſure among this crowd Charaxus, whom he conſidered as a happy lover. The latter being already piqued againſt Phaon for the affair with his ſiſter, looked upon him as an odious rival, capable even of engaging the affection of his miſtreſs; a favour which none of her admirers had been able to obtain ever ſince her amour with Eſopus: for Rhodope, intent only upon amaſſing great wealth, ſatisfied their ardent deſires without ever anſwering their affectionate ſentiments by a mutual return, which left their hearts always with many unſatisfied wiſhes. She juſtified, however, the forebodings of Charaxus, and conducted as it were by an unaccountable deſtiny from the moſt ugly, to the moſt handſome mortal; ſhe found beſides theſe two, no other objects deſerving of real affection.

The connexion between her and Phaon, was conducted with ſo much true delicacy, as if the courtiſan had been changed into a Queen, for they loved one another in reality; and it muſt be allowed, that commonly the irregularities attributed to love, are more the conſequences of a character loſt to virtue, and abandoned to vice, than the effects of that ſweet paſſion; for true and perfect love is ſo far from corrupting the mind, that it is rather elevated

and

and purified by it. If every ſenſual appetite is willing to contaminate its purity and innocence, it is an uſurpation, againſt which virtuous perſons can eaſily guard themſelves. This little apology in favour of love is here out of its place; for it may be eaſily admitted, that the ſenſes were likewiſe engaged in the connexion we are ſpeaking of: but at leaſt was this part of it covered with the veil of myſtery; and this is all what might be expected in a heroine of Rhodope's profeſſion. Whilſt ſhe in ſecret gave a thouſand marks of her affection to Phaon, Charaxus gave himſelf up to deſpair, and never obtained the the leaſt favourable look. So ungrateful a conduct forced him to return to his former buſineſs, in order the better to enable himſelf to ſoften Rhodope into complacency by new preſents. She ſcarcely noticed his departure; being quite enraptured with Phaon, ſhe was indifferent to every other object: and, the days ſhe ſpent in his company, were all too ſhort in her opinion.

She was deſirous of hearing from him even the moſt trifling circumſtances of his connexion with Sappho. He obeyed, and though it appeared from his recital, that he was become quite indifferent to the memory of this illuſtrious lady; ſhe ſeemed, however, to obſerve, that the remembrance of all her paſt favours was ſtill too much preſent to his mind; ſhe therefore deſired of him to give up to her all the letters ſhe had written to him, and all the verſes ſhe had addreſſed him in. No ſooner was ſhe poſſeſſed of theſe precious pledges of Phaon's devotion, than ſhe read them with impatience, and found in their contents new ſubjects for tormenting herſelf. The pathetic picture of love, which ſo thoroughly filled her breaſt; thoſe ſtrokes which ſtrongly marked that Phaon had likewiſe been engaged in the ſame paſſion: in ſhort, every thing contributed ſo much to fill her mind with jealouſy, that in one of its

fits,

fits, ſhe without mercy burned thoſe elegant productions which well deſerved to live through all ages. And to this circumſtance it is chiefly owing, that poſterity has been deprived of them: nor is this one of the leaſt loſſes which we owe to this prepoſterous paſſion. One ſingle poem eſcaped the general ſhipwreck. Accident had conducted it between the folds of Rhodope's garments. A Greek female ſlave, of remarkable fine parts, found it when ſhe was undreſſing her miſtreſs, and greedily ſeized upon this preſent, which accident had ſo miraculouſly preſerved. This hymn was written in the firſt days of Phaon's love; and in it you may eaſily diſcover all that deſire, raging in a boſom, which knows of no controul; at the ſame time that you admire all that pathetic ſimplicity and harmony of expreſſion, blended with the inimitable beauties of imagery and ſentiment, the peculiar properties of the golden age of Grecian poetry.

An HYMN to VENUS.

I.

O Venus, beauty of the ſkies,
To whom a thouſand temples riſe,
gayly, falſe in gentle ſmiles
Full of love perplexing wiles:
O goddeſs! from my heart remove
The waſting cares and pains of love.

II.

II.

If ever thou haſt kindly heard
A ſong in ſoft diſtreſs preferr'd,
Propitious to my tuneful vow,
O gentle Goddeſs! hear me now.
Deſcend, thou bright, immortal gueſt,
In all thy radiant charms confeſt.

III.

Thou once didſt leave almighty Jove,
And all the golden roofs above:
Thy care thy wanton ſparrows drew,
Hov'ring in air they lightly flew;
As to my bower they wing'd their way:
I ſaw their quiv'ring pinions play.

IV.

The birds diſmiſt (while you remain)
Bore back their empty cart again.
Then you, with looks divinely mild,
In ev'ry heav'nly feature ſmil'd,
And aſk'd, What new complaints I made?
And, Why I call'd you to my aid?

V.

What phrenzy in my boſom raged,
And by what cure to be aſſwaged?

What

What gentle youth I would allure,
Whom in my artful toils ſecure?
Who does thy tender heart ſubdue?
Tell me, my Sappho, tell me who?

VI.

Tho' now he ſhuns thy longing arms,
He ſoon ſhall court thy ſlighted charms;
Tho' now thy off'rings he deſpiſe,
He ſoon to thee ſhall ſacrifice;
Tho' now he freeze, he ſoon ſhall burn,
And be thy victim in his turn.

VII.

Celeſtial viſitant, once more
Thy needful preſence I implore!
In pity come and eaſe my grief,
Bring my diſtemper'd ſoul relief;
Favour thy ſuppliant's hidden fires,
And give me all my heart deſires.

Rhodophe had found this poem ſo richly fraught with love, addreſſed to the object of her own paſſion, that ſhe would have been highly chagrined, had ſhe ever been informed of its fate; but luckily her waiting maid had modeſty enough not to boaſt with its poſſeſſion. In the mean while, was Phaon plagued by Rhodope for the memory of Sappho: ſhe had on that ſubject ſo many refinements, which, after having firſt cauſed him a deal of pleaſure,

began

began now to become troubleſome to him. He gave her politely to underſtand, that being inſtructed by fame of his amours with Sappho, ſhe could not reaſonably expect to find a heart quite unacquainted with love. She found herſelf offended by this reproach; however at laſt, tired with theſe quarrels, and loaded with her favours; the fickle Phaon let indifference ſucceed to his ardent paſſion, and his ſtay in Egypt, was ſo much ſhortened by him, that the greateſt part of hiſtorians were ignorant, of his having left Sicily ſince his return from Leſbos. Be it vanity or fickleneſs of temper; Rhodope made not even the leaſt effort to retain him. Her admirers returned with more impatience than ever; and it might have been ſaid that ſhe was a new Goddeſs, who made her appearance, if the concluſions ſhould have been drawn, from the great joy and happineſs they all univerſally betrayed at the removal of an antagoniſt both lovely and beloved. Charaxus returned likewiſe ſoon after, and having at laſt entirely ruined himſelf; he became inſupportable to her when he could preſent no other offerings to her ſhrine, but his love. He endured for ſome time her contempt, but at laſt he found his departure moſt neceſſary, and having left Naucratis in extreme poverty, he endeavoured in vain to raiſe himſelf above it, by his trade. But having loſt all his credit, the remainder of his life became a ſeries of ſufferings and miſery.

Rhodope in the mean time ordered her pyramid to be finiſhed, which according to Pliny, though not the biggeſt, was at leaſt the moſt perfect, and the moſt ornamented. The preſence of Phaon had for a time put a ſtop to its progreſs. But ſhe did not entruſt Egypt alone, with the monuments for the preſervation of her memory. The temple of Delphos received from her very rich offerings, conſiſting chiefly in the moſt neceſſary things for ſacrifices. The care for the preſervation of her memory did not ſo much engroſs her

thoughts, that ſhe ſhould not at the ſame time look out for the enjoyment of new pleaſures; feaſts, the chace, and fiſhing, took up her time in their turn; bathing was in her opinion ſo agreeable an occupation, that ſhe waited with impatience for the return of that ſeaſon, when the river Nile after having overflowed the land, returns again to the bounds preſcribed to him by Providence. A magnificent tent was fixed on the ſhore of the river, the day when ſhe was going to bathe. Every thing round it ſeemed to breathe voluptuouſneſs, the perfumes were profuſely laviſhed, and a delicious muſic was heard whilſt ſhe was undreſſing. Another tent was erected in the Nile itſelf, in order to ſhelter her againſt the heat of the ſun. Her lovers made it their occupation to accompany her, and they altogether formed a numerous, ſplendid, and ſubmiſſive ſet of courtiers. Thoſe who were higheſt in favour, were allowed to make part of her retinue, in an elegantly painted and gilt boat, which carried her to the bath; and by the praiſes beſtowed upon her, they endeavoured to make this party of pleaſure ſtill more delicious.

One day, when her charms ſhone forth with more luſtre, it was obſerved, that even in her elegant and delicious undreſs, her beauty appeared with ſo much brilliancy and majeſtic grandeur, that it ſeemed to preſage her approaching elevation. Every body was deſirous of expreſſing his admiration, thoſe who remained on ſhore looked upon her ſhort abſence, as a real exile; happy were the few who accompanied her in the boat: her waiting women could not ſatiate their eyes with viewing her face; admiration cauſed a general ſilence, of which proud Rhodope felt all the value. During theſe moments of ſilent aſtoniſhment, an eagle darted ſuddenly down into the boat and ſeized one of her ſlippers, carried it precipitately off, and flew away with uncommon rapidity, ſo that they all ſoon loſt ſight of the bird. So

extraordinary an accident was by unanimous conſent favourably interpretated to the honour of Rhodope; ſhe alone ſeemed not intereſted in it, and playing in the water, ſhe even refuſed to pay the leaſt attention to the tumult, and the acclamations of the ſpectators.

The eagle flew in the mean time ſtraight to Memphis, and dropt Rhodope's ſlipper on the lap of Pſammetichus, who was then ſitting on his throne, and trying the cauſes of his ſubjects, as he always was uſed to do. An accident of ſo ſtrange and novel a nature, put the whole meeting into emotion; and the king's curioſity was excited at the ſight of ſo ſmall a ſlipper, which naturally ſuppoſed a very pretty little foot. He immediately gave orders for a careful enquiry to be made in his dominions about the owner of that ſlipper, and that ſhe ſhould be ſummoned to appear before him. This hiſtory undoubtedly gave riſe to a tale, which is found among thoſe which are known under the name of, *Contes de Fées*. Pſammetichus was a great king, not only on account of the great dominions he was poſſeſſed of; but ſtill more ſo, on account of the excellent manner in which he governed them, and the ſkill and art he put in practice in recovering them out of the hands of thoſe uſurpers, who had extorted them from his anceſtors. This prince had ſpent his early years in the character of a private individual; and not being able to recover the throne by force, he found himſelf obliged, in order to be able to execute his great plans, to be one of the twelve rulers of the kingdom, before he could become the ſole maſter of the whole. But his extenſive genius, his valour, and good conduct aſſiſted him in acquiring the ſovereign power, which he uſed for the happineſs of his ſubjects as a prince, who wanted to be more conſpicuous for equity and juſtice, than for power and abſolute ſway. Pſammetichus in

order to obtain a deciſion, in the famous diſpute between the Phrygians and Egyptians about the point, who of them was the moſt ancient nation, ordered two children to be ſhut up with two dumb nurſes, till the age when other children are able to ſpeak. It is related, that the firſt ſound they uttered on coming forth from their lonely retirement was *bekkos*, which ſignifies *bread*, in the Phrygian language, and gave the deciſion in favour of the Phrygians, who very much boaſted of this advantage. Since we are not to write the hiſtory of Pſammetichus, let this ſuffice to point only ſlightly out, who this king was.

The officers of Pſammetichus ſearched in vain a great many provinces, till at laſt they found at Naucratis what they had been in queſt of. The common report of the adventure with the eagle was ſtill circulating, which directed the king's officers towards Rhodope, to whom they were introduced, and gave her an account of their buſineſs, and notified to her the will of their maſter. Her great beauty, together with the marvellous circumſtance of the ſlipper's being carried off by the eagle, inſpired them with uncommon reſpect for Rhodope, whom they looked upon as reſerved for great fortune and rank; they intreated her to fix a day for her departure; but ſince ſhe was deſirous of appearing at Memphis with a ſplendour, capable of giving credit to her reputation, ſhe aſked to give her time, in order to be able to prepare a moſt ſumptuous equipage. When every thing was ready, ſhe began her journey, accompanied by the king's officers. Her admirers were ready to follow her; but ſhe preſcribed to them the hard taſk to part with her at the gates of Naucratis; the moſt paſſionate of them gave, by their diſmal complaints, the moſt unqueſtionable proofs of their grief, and all together bevailed her departure by tears and ſighs. Rhodope's vanity was

much

much flattered by their deportment, though her heart took not the leaſt part at the affecting ſcene. When ſhe arrived at Memphis, the inhabitants of that immenſe capital expreſſed their admiration by loud acclamations, ſeeing her paſs by with that pomp and beauty; which encreaſed her charms and confidence. Pſammetichus himſelf was ſeized with aſtoniſhment and love, the very moment he got ſight of her; he came down from his throne, whereon he then was ſeated, and ſpoke to her with that perplexity and ſubmiſſion, which conſtantly accompany the beginning of a violent paſſion. Rhodope received all theſe honours with uncommon preſence of mind, with reſpect and with eaſe. When the king conducted her to one of the fineſt appartments of his palace, her deportment was ſo majeſtic, that this alone authoriſed the king's behaviour to her. No ſooner had Pſammetichus no other witneſſes than Rhodope, than he began to talk of his new kindled love in the ſtrongeſt and moſt animated expreſſions; ſhe heard him without interruption, and when he left off ſpeaking, ſhe ſaid to him ſmiling: my liege, my perſon perhaps has the honour of pleaſing you, but my mind and temper may have a thouſand faults; permit me to make ſure of my conqueſt; for it ſhould be extremely cruel to loſe ſuch a one as you are. Pſammetichus was a little ſtartled at this anſwer, which he did by no means expect, from a female of Rhodope's character, but he anſwered to it only by ſighs; and beauty had the power by its potent magic this time, to aſſuage thoſe very deſires it had kindled. It is certain that Rhodope's reſiſtance inſpired the king with more eagerneſs, and that the ſweet hope of becoming beloved appeared to him more delicious than a precipitated poſſeſſion. He left no means untried to gain the affection of a miſtreſs, the enjoyment of which was ſo neceſſary to this happineſs. He diſplayed all his magnificence in

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the diverſions he invented for her amuſement. He became aſſiduous and preſſing, and his paſſion inſpired him with a thouſand gallant ideas, and his gallantry furniſhed him conſtantly ſome affectionate ſituation. Rhodope obſerving the ſway ſhe gained over him, gave full ſcope to her ambition. A crown appeared to her the only juſt price of her favours, and pride joining her ſelf-love, repreſented to her fancy nothing but crowns and ſcepters at her feet.

One day, when Pſammetichus was painting his paſſion in the moſt animated colours, and with the moſt delicate touches; ſhe ſaid to him, my Lord, I confeſs that my paſſed conduct ſhould make my reſiſtance appear in your eyes inſupportable, and even perhaps ridiculous; but your own greatneſs is an obſtruction to your deſires: I am uſed to reign over the hearts and deſires; I pretend to be abſolute miſtreſs of thoſe whom love ſubjects to me, and I perhaps ſhall no ſooner have crowned your love, than you will again remember that you are a powerful monarch. I ſhall never forget it, my liege, if you even ſhould not remember it; always reſtrained by that majeſtic title, I ſhall conſtantly apprehend to loſe you, and I would loſe you moſt certainly. The conducting the affairs of your empire, your important occupations, will cauſe you to neglect the agreable cares of love: and it is however theſe cares, which cauſe its raptures and duration. I cannot help obſerving to you, my liege, that I ſhall always revere you as my maſter, whilſt you are no more than my admirer, and that unfortunately, you will perhaps conſider me only as your ſlave, though in reality I were your miſtreſs.

Pſammetichus liſtened attentively, in order to ſee what ſhe intended by this diſcourſe. Tell me charming Rhodope, ſaid he, what better voucher

of

of my conſtancy do you then pretend to have, than this very love, which you treat injuriouſly? Can you not diſpoſe of my heart? Are you not ſole miſtreſs of my treaſures? Will you have one half of my empire? Speak, Rhodope, ſpeak, there are no bounds which I preſcribe to the teſtimonies of my flame. Ah, my ſovereign, ſaid ſhe, intereſt has very little ſway with me, the offerings which I ſent to Delphos, the pyramid with which I embelliſhed your empire, the gold which I laviſhed with profuſion, muſt witneſs it even to poſterity, that Rhodope was more liable to the impreſſions of glory, than wealth. All what you are poſſeſſed of, added ſhe, is ſcarcely ſufficient to replace my liberalities. The king however though very much in love, obſerved with ſurprize the ſtrange ambition of Rhodope. A few words eſcaped him, which deſpair had expreſſed from him, and ſhe received them with moderation: but ſo far from being more kind to him, ſhe only increaſed her reſerved behaviour; and the accident with the eagle came then luckily to her aſſiſtance. Pſammetichus whom love aſſiſted to deceive, thought to diſcover ſome unjuſtifiable motives of her coyneſs, which he ſuſpected not to be natural: however, for fear of growing weak by a longer converſation, he ſaid to her at his departure: Ah cruel Rhodope, you precipitate me into deſpair! Conſider that my reſpect may at laſt yield to fury; I leave you for ſome moments, you are miſtreſs both of my life and of my death; but if you delay any longer to decide upon it, I may perhaps, before I depart this life, give you reaſon to repent of your indifference. This violence was ſo far from diſpleaſing to Rhodope, that ſhe on the contrary founded on it freſh hopes; and the quick return of the king convinced her, that ſhe had not been wrong in her conjectures; he returned with more ſubmiſſion than ever to aſk her pardon, and to propoſe to her to partake of a party of pleaſure, which he had

had prepared for her on the river Nile. An infinite number of gilt ſmall craft, ornamented on their inſide with Sidonian tapeſtry, covered with magnificent awnings, elegantly ſet off with golden bindings and taſſels; paraded in the port of Memphis: all the ladies of the court had dreſſed themſelves out for this promenade, the gentlemen had forgot nothing in order to appear there with ſplendour. A thouſand different inſtruments began to play, the moment when the King and Rhodope embarked; a moſt magnificent collation was ſerved up, and every thing contributed to enliven the people of this ſuperb fleet. They moved on ſlowly upon the river, in order to enjoy the cool of the moſt delicious evening in the world. The boatſmen dreſſed in the moſt ſumptuous ſtuffs, kept with their oars ſo exact time to the delightful muſic, that this formed a kind of harmony inſpiring the whole group with the ſweeteſt revery. Rhodope appeared with ſuch luſtre of beauty, and ſo winning an air, that they entirely obſcured even the prodigious quantity of pearls and precious ſtones, which the liberality of Pſammetichus had added to the ordinary ornaments of Rhodope. The amorous King endeavouring above all to pleaſe her, diveſted himſelf of his rank, and tried to expreſs at her feet by words what he was but too ſtrongly feeling: he vowed in this moment, that his higheſt ambition ſhould be to win her heart and condemned himſelf for the impetuoſity of his paſſion, and conſidered then tenderneſs of affection the moſt precious gift. This was the happy point to which Rhodope wanted to bring him; but her art did not ſtop there, ſhe feigned for ſeveral days afterwards an alarming ſadneſs, and nothing could in all appearance cauſe her any pleaſure: ſhe however never failed to be preſent at all the entertainments the King gave on her account; ſhe danced even ſeveral times with ſo much good grace and elegance, that all the moſt beau-

tiful

tiful Egyptian ladies became jealous of her, and the men would have addreſſed their vows to her, had they dared to do it; but as ſoon as ſhe had darted new ſtrokes at Pſammetichus's heart, ſhe returned to her ſadneſs, and was in all appearance, not in the leaſt affected by the immoderate praiſes laviſhed on her on theſe occaſions. This conduct inſpired the King with a dreadful fit of jealouſy, he repreſented to himſelf, that ſhe regretted one of her former admirers, or that ſhe had found in his court ſomebody whom ſhe thought worthy of being beloved; this cruel imagination, chagrined the King ſo much as very nigh to kill him. He complained of it immediately to Rhodope, as a perſon who was dreadfully afraid to hear, what he however longingly deſired to know. She in the beginning anſwered very ill to his complaints and reproaches, and this cauſed the effect, which ſhe had foreſeen. The King, not being able to pacify the emotions of his affliction, began to be violently enraged; the cauſe of which was very flattering to Rhodope's ambition. No my liege, ſaid ſhe to him, one day when ſhe thought herſelf capable of becoming the abſolute miſtreſs over the mind of the monarch; no, I regret no-body; and would to heaven, added ſhe artfully, I had no ſtronger affections for you, than thoſe which others have hitherto inſpired me with. Well then ſweet Rhodope, replied Pſammetichus, what hinders me then from becoming the moſt happy of all mortals? This very affection, reſumed ſhe, which cauſes to me the moſt dreadful apprehenſions, not to be able to hold you, ſhould the ties ———— at theſe words ſhe ſtopt, and looked downwards with a timorous air. The King was moved to the very innermoſt receſſes of his ſoul, both by her words, and the behaviour of Rhodope; and it wanted but very little that he did not agree to all that very moment. But fetching a very deep ſigh, he ſaid: ſweet Rhodope,

I adore you, I call the Gods to witneſs, but alas, what can I do more, than to offer you my heart and my life? At theſe words, he ſuddenly went out and left Rhodope enraptured with the ſituation to which this love was reduced, and whoſe confuſion promiſed her an early conqueſt.

Pſammetichus did violence to himſelf, not to ſee her for the ſpace of two days, during which he was ſuffering all the grief which ever love and ambition can inflict on the human mind. He foreſaw on one hand eternal reſiſtance, or the neceſſity of falling under the diſpleaſure of the beloved object in caſe he refuſed to gratify her ambition: he likewiſe felt on the other hand the force of argument his reaſon ſuggeſted to him, and the combat became violent, his whole frame was ſcarcely capable of reſiſting to the emotions of his mind. He was ſtill in this ſituation, when Rhodope reſolving to add the finiſhing ſtroke, entered into his private apartment; where leaning on a table, he was ſhedding ſome tears, which he could by no means withhold. She was in an undreſs, her hairs appeared in diſorder; her eyes were bathed in tears; ſhe threw herſelf down at the feet of the Prince: and without daring to lift her eyes up to him, ſhe ſaid my liege, I come to implore your pardon, for daring to believe myſelf worthy to be beloved by you. Alas! ſaid he, in lifting her up and kiſſing her hand: the ſituation you find me in, proves but too much my weakneſs; for Rhodope, added he, you don't love me, though I ſtill adore you. Sire, ſaid ſhe, I don't know what kind of ambition had perſuaded me, that the eagle preſaged to me a lucky fate, I can find it no where than with you; but ſince your kindneſs extends no further than to make me your miſtreſs, permit me, my Prince, that I may ſhut myſelf up in my pyramid far from the connexions with this world, in order to bewail there my misfortune, not to be poſſeſſed

of virtue

of virtue enough, to merit the hand of my ſovereign; or for not having been able to inſpire him with ſo much love, as would make him forget my paſt conduct.

Pſammetichus looked wiſtfully upon Rhodope, during a diſcourſe which ſhe accompanied with all the graces capable of rendering grief itſelf pleaſing. This heavenly face, with all the energy of grief ſtrongly painted on it, and laſtly that heroical reſolution; all together determined him to prefer the poſſeſſion of Rhodope, to the honourable ambition of reſiſting to it any longer. You have conquered, ſaid he, ſtretching out his hand towards her, charming Rhodope, you have conquered; is it poſſible to refuſe any thing to the beloved object, or rather could I poſſibly exiſt any longer without you? I don't conſider you otherwiſe, than as the Queen of Egypt, and I ſhall immediately give the neceſſary orders, for celebrating our nuptials, and your coronation. Rhodope, whoſe joy was immenſely great, and ſtrongly expreſſed in the gliſtening of her eyes, embraced the knees of Pſammetichus, who eagerly endeavoured to lift her up. The King had all the Princes, the Lords of the Empire and the Prieſts of Iſis, aſſembled. He imparted to them his reſolution; and he found no oppoſition in the minds of people prepared already for that great event. The adventure of the eagle, which was repeated very advantageouſly, was conſidered as a moſt certain preſage, which chance could by no means have produced. Accidents of this kind had a great weight in thoſe times; and every body eagerly embraced ſuch preſages, which were conſidered as the interpreters and meſſengers of deſtiny itſelf. The nation applauded the choice of their King; and after many entertainments and feſtivities, which preceded for ſeveral days the nuptials, Pſammetichus at laſt gave publicly his hand to a perſon, who had never

thought

thought that chaſtity ought to be ranked among the virtues. So much is however true, that ſharing afterwards the throne of a great King, virtue became her chiefeſt ambition, and appeared to her under the moſt amiable form; and ſhe atoned for her former diſorderly life, by an inviolable attachment to her royal ſpouſe, whom ſhe had acquired by her beauty and ingenuity.

THE END.